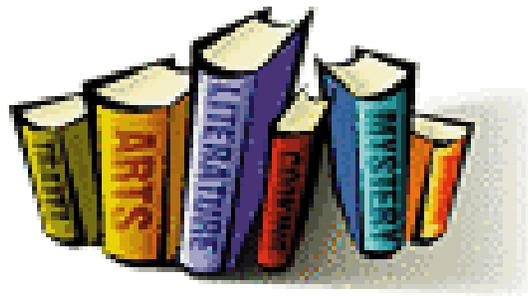


VERNON ISD

PARENT HANDBOOK



MISSION STATEMENT

Vernon Independent School District is committed to the development of a school system in which all students can learn in a safe and orderly climate and one which all stakeholders can be proud of. We will be an exemplary education community respecting and valuing students, parents, community members, and district employees. Our students will understand that responsibilities accompany the privileges of citizenship and will have the foundation to be successful in their chosen endeavors.

WELCOME

This handbook contains a sampling of VISD policies, procedures and programs. This guide was written to address many of the questions that new families have regarding the District however, this is not meant to be a comprehensive or detailed report of state and local laws and policies. Please contact the District or school offices for additional information when necessary.

ASSESSMENTS

EVALUATIONS: Assessing what a student has learned is a vital part of the educational process. Assessment of both academic and social growth occurs on a daily basis in an informal manner. Structured assessment is used to emphasize and determine academic growth. Students in danger of failing receive progress reports mid-term of each six weeks grading period. All students receive a report card at the end of each six weeks. In lieu of a report card, parents of kindergartners and first graders receive a parent conference at the end of the first six weeks. Any parent with a special concern about school should not hesitate to contact the school office for an appointment.

TESTING: Standardized tests are given as required by law as well as to determine program needs and to ensure accountability for student achievement. Norm referenced tests compare a student's performance with the average performance of others in a large norming group. Criterion referenced tests compare a student's performance to a set established performance standard (i.e. Getting 70% of the problems correct on a test). Except as provided by Section 39.023(d), a parent is entitled to access a copy of each state assessment instrument administered under Section 39.023(a, b, or c) to the parents' child.

ACT: The ACT Assessment (ACT) is a national college admission examination that consists of tests in English, Reading, Math, and Social Studies.

AP: The Advanced Placement test is given to students who have taken an advanced placement course in high school for the purpose of obtaining college credit. Students must score a minimum of a 3 on a 4 point system to obtain college credit, colleges and universities award credit based on the student score and university policies.

PSAT/NMSQT: The Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test is a standardized test that provides firsthand practice for the SAT I: Reasoning Test and SAT II: Writing Test. It also gives a chance to enter National Merit Scholarship Corporation (NMSC) scholarship programs. This test should be taken in the junior year. It measures verbal reasoning skills, critical reading skills, math problem-solving skills, and writing skills.

SAT: The Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) is a three-hour test that measures verbal and mathematical reasoning skills students have developed over time and skills they need to be successful academically. Many colleges and universities use the SAT as one indicator among others-class rank, high school GPA, extracurricular activities, personal essay, and teacher recommendations-of a student's readiness to do college-level work. The SAT is scored on a scale of 200-800 (for math and verbal) and is typically taken by high school juniors and seniors. Each edition of the SAT includes a Verbal and Math section, with a specific number of questions related to content.

STAR: The Star Reading Assessment is available for grades 1-5.

STAAR: The State of Texas Assessment of Academic Readiness, a criterion referenced test, required by law for public school students in Texas, is used to measure achievement. The results for each student in reading and math are reported as a scale score. Reading/English Language Arts and Math tests are administered to grades 3-8, writing at grades 4 and 7, science at grade 5 and 8 social studies at grade 8. High School Level Assessments are End of Course Exams for English I, II, Biology,

Algebra I and US History. These tests are the basis for the District's accreditation rating.

ATTENDANCE OBLIGATIONS

ATTENDANCE: Attendance and academic achievement go hand-in-hand. Students who are at least six years of age on or before, September 1st, or who have been previously enrolled in first grade, and who have not yet reached their 18th birthday shall attend school for the entire period the program is offered. Once a student is enrolled in pre-kindergarten or kindergarten, the student must continue to attend school.

By law, a student shall be given credit for a class only if the student has been in attendance 90% of the days the class is offered, unless an attendance committee gives the student credit due to extenuating circumstances for the absences. A parent/guardian is required by law to compel the student to attend school. A parent/guardian who fails to meet this obligation may be guilty of a violation of compulsory school attendance laws and subject to prosecution.

If the educational needs of the student are not met through some legally acceptable alternative, each school age boy or girl is required by law to attend school each day during the school year except for the following reasons:

1. Sickness (doctor/dentist appointments; for extended illness, please call nurse)
2. Sickness or death in the family
3. Observance of certain religious days
4. Suspension/Expulsion
5. Necessity of appearing in court

A pupil absent from school for one of these reasons will be allowed an opportunity, as detailed in the student handbook, to complete all assignments and tests missed during the absence.

ABSENCE: Parents are requested to call between 8:00 am and 9:00 am of the first day of a child's absence. Students are to bring a note from home on the day returning from the absence. It must be signed by a parent, giving the date and reason for the absence. If the child is absent for a medical appointment please bring documentation of the appointment when the student returns.

Students who need to leave school early should bring written permission from a parent stating the reason. It is the responsibility of the student to confer with all teachers following an absence to complete any work that has been missed.

TARDY: As provided by law, students who are chronically tardy to school may be charged with "Failure to Attend School". Parents of these students could be charged with "Thwarting Compulsory School Attendance". Students are to bring a note from home when they are tardy. It must be signed by a parent, giving the date and reason for the tardy.

VACATIONS: Some parents remove students from school for vacations and other non-emergency activities. Parents must accept the responsibility of conferring with the campus principal in advance since these are not excusable reasons for student absence and may impact compulsory attendance laws.

BREAKFAST AND LUNCH PROGRAMS

Students are encouraged to purchase a meal card for daily or emergency use. Students are served in the cafeteria. Students may purchase breakfast or lunch daily, or a card for as many days as requested. Cards are computerized and are kept at the school. Meals purchased but not used may be extended to the following year. Students leaving the district or graduating may request and receive a refund for unused meals. 2006-2007 meal prices:

	K-5th Grade	6th-12th Grade	Adults
Breakfast	\$1.70	\$1.70	\$2.00
Lunch	\$2.25	\$2.50	\$3.00

When lunches are brought from home, please label lunchboxes with the name of the student. Glass containers are not permitted. A menu calendar of breakfasts and lunches are sent home each month and are posted on the district's website

MEALS FOR INCOME ELIGIBLE CHILDREN: The office personnel will provide applications and information concerning free milk, free meals or reduced meals.

ATTENTION AGRICULTURAL WORKERS: Register your children in the Migrant Education Program. If you are a new family to this area or if you leave this area for the purpose of working in agriculture on a temporary or seasonal basis, your children could be eligible to receive supplemental educational services offered by the Migrant Education Program.

If this information applies to you or your family, please contact the school district at (940) 553-1900.

CHILD ABUSE

When a teacher, administrator or other employee in the district observes or reasonably suspects that a student has been physically, mentally or sexually abused, that person is **REQUIRED** by Texas law to immediately file a verbal report with the police, sheriff, probation office, welfare department or the Child Protective Services office. The name of the person required to file the report shall be confidential.

COMMUNICATION

Effective communication is important to the well being of the entire school community. If you have questions regarding the District, campuses, *or* your student, please contact the school offices for assistance.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: General announcements are made each morning at each campus. Students should pay close attention to these announcements for information related to school activities.

ELECTONICS / PAGERS: The District prohibits the use of all telecommunications devices, including cellular phones and pagers/beepers, at all schools during the instructional school day. Students shall be allowed to possess such devices; however, such devices must not be visible and must remain turned off during the instructional school day.

INTERNET WEBSITE: The VISD website is constantly being revised and updated with current school data and information. You may also contact staff by email. Please bookmark our web site on your computer: <http://www.vernonisd.org>

PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCES: Consistent parent/teacher communication is one key to student success. Parents are encouraged to communicate with school personnel any time an information exchange would better meet the needs of a student or the school. The school office will assist you in setting up a conference with teachers or administrators.

SCHOOL CLOSINGS: Events may occur that necessitate the delay or closing of the schools. The decision to close the district or to change the starting time is made by the Superintendent of Schools who will advise the local radio station KVWC Radio Station (1490 am) and on Wichita Falls TV stations, if possible and alert them of the VISD decision. Any change in the regular schedule of the district will then be broadcast over these stations. Additionally, the announcement will be posted on the district's homepage. Staff and students are advised to listen to major radio and television stations for current news reports.

TELEPHONE MESSAGES: Phones are available to students for emergency related calls. Messages for students from parents should be made in plenty of time for follow-up from the office personnel. Automated phone messages may be placed from the campus to student's homes regarding attendance issues or school events.

COUNSELING

A counselor at each campus is available to all students to deal with a variety of needs. These may include classroom concerns, academic planning and scheduling, career exploration and development, friendship concerns, group counseling, external issues which affect school performance, self-concept, and crisis issues. The counselor is also available to parents and teachers, as needed, to help ensure success for all Vernon students.

CURRICULAR INFORMATION

ELEMENTARY: The Elementary language arts program is a balanced program which integrates listening, speaking, reading, literature, and writing. Language arts and reading instruction is a developmental skill process. The mathematics program emphasizes the application of math skills to solve story problems and the development of concept skills through increasingly complex problems. There are many hands-on experiences, and concrete materials are used to provide a basis for understanding numbers and processes. Science and social studies are also taught as part of the elementary curriculum. Enrichment and lab classes include art, music, physical education, computer, and library.

MIDDLE SCHOOL: In middle school, grades six, seven and eight, the curriculum expands to allow for more in-depth study in a departmentalized structure. Classes are designed for middle level students in math, English and science, and social studies. Students are given some options for electives and co-curricular activities. Extra curricular activities and UIL policies are introduced. Students are given more freedom and responsibility.

HIGH SCHOOL: During the transition in a four-year high school, students will become familiar with the rigors of a system, which is designed to provide the highest standard of educational achievement. Academic and elective courses are offered to the student to further prepare them for higher education. The counselor will plan with students in making choices concerning course offerings and graduation degree options. Many activities, both extra-curricular and co-curricular, are available, and students are encouraged to become a part of as many as they choose and as their schedule permits.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS:

Vernon ISD has special programs in place to help all students meet their academic potential. Please check with the counselor for information concerning each of these programs and how to apply/qualify for them.

Academic Programs: High School programs are offered which allow students the opportunity to participate in College Board Pre-AP/AP courses and exams, dual credit courses, correspondence courses, on-line correspondence courses, distance learning classes, and credit by exam opportunities. Students and parents should contact the school counselors for information concerning these options.

Dyslexia: Vernon offers a dyslexia program for students who have difficulty learning to read, write, or spell, despite conventional instruction, adequate intelligence, and socio-cultural opportunities. Teachers are trained in the multi-sensory teaching approach (MTA) which provides instruction, using multi-sensory methods with reading, writing, and spelling components. The program is taught by a certified teacher who has had extensive training in the techniques needed to implement the program.

ESL: Students, whose home language survey indicates another language other than English, are tested for English as a Second Language (ESL). If they score Non-English speaking or limited English speaking, they are offered an ESL class. Parental permission must be granted by the for a student to attend the class. The goal for students placed in ESL, is to show mastery in oral language, reading, and writing on the ESL Idea Test. Also, they must score 40% or above on the ITBS and have passing scores on the TAKS at their grade level to exit the program. Students who exit ESL are monitored for two years to make certain they maintain their academic status.

Gifted and Talented: In an effort to meet the individual needs of all students enrolled in VISD, the district maintains a Gifted and Talented program. Qualifying students who evidence exceptional intellectual capacity are provided special learning opportunities for extension of the classroom instruction. Students are formally identified as GT students, through a battery of tests and documentation, in order to enroll in this program. At the Elementary, K-5 students are served through cluster grouping with classroom teachers. All VISD teachers are training in differentiated instruction and attend annual GT training. Students maybe served through a pull-out program by a teacher with specific GT training. At the Middle School, and High School, students are served through Pre-AP and AP (Advanced Placement) and dual credit courses. Screening for this program is done in the spring of every year. Nominations may be made by school personnel, parents or community members. Anyone wishing to nominate a student for the screening process should contact the school principal, GT coordinator, or counselor of the student's campus of attendance.

Reading Improvement: This program provides some first-graders with extra help in reading and writing. After being recommended by their classroom teacher, the children with the greatest need are selected first and evaluated by the Reading Improvement teacher. The Reading Improvement teacher provides small group instruction for 40 minutes a day to each qualifying student. This early intervention gives children the chance to develop reading skills that keep them at grade level. This provides short-term help without placing negative labels on learners. When children progress to the point that they no longer need the extra help, they are dismissed from the program and additional first graders are given the opportunity for participation in the program.

Special Education: Some students demonstrate a special need for a particular type of assistance which is supported by Federal funding. This program includes such assistance as Speech, Resource, Content Mastery, Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Life Skills, or Challenge Class. These students are referred, screened and tested to determine if Federal criteria is met for specific programming. Individual goals are established and monitored each year through an Admit, Review and Dismiss (ARD) committee.

Options and Requirements For Providing Assistance to Students Who Have Learning Difficulties or Who Need or May Need Special Education

If a child is experiencing learning difficulties, the parent may contact the person listed below to learn about the district's overall general education referral or screening system for support services. This system links students to a variety of support options, including referral for a special education evaluation. Students

having difficulty in the regular classroom should be considered for tutorial, compensatory, and other academic

or behavior support services that are available to all students. At any time, a parent is entitled to request an evaluation for special education services. Within a reasonable amount of time, the district must decide if the evaluation is needed. If evaluation is needed, the parent will be notified and asked to provide informed written consent for the evaluation. The district must complete the evaluation and the report within 60 calendar days of the date the district receives the written consent. The district must give a copy of the report to the parent. If the district determines that the evaluation is not needed, the district will provide the parent with a written notice that explains why the child will not be evaluated. This written notice will include a statement that informs the parent of their rights if they disagree with the district. Additionally, the notice must inform the parent how to obtain a copy of the Notice of Procedural Safeguards - Rights of Parents of Students with Disabilities.

The designated person to contact regarding options for a child experiencing learning difficulties or a referral for evaluation for special education is:

Contact Person: Rita Collier, Special Education Director

Phone Number: (940)553-1900

504: Some students require additional assistance to maintain an acceptable level of achievement. This program is applicable to any student who (1) has, (2) has a record of having, or (3) is regarded as having, a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits a major life activity such as caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, or working. Procedures for assessment, determination, and placement are much the same as for Special Education. Students are referred for screening, testing and may qualify for special modifications. Curriculum can be modified through a variety of methods depending on student need. The number of items on a paper can be reduced, formatting of some written assignments can be altered, extended time to complete assignments can be helpful, highlighted texts are available, a variety of note-taking strategies are used, instruction can be given in shorter segments and may require repetitive reinforcement, written materials can be read to a student and dictation is an alternative, and tests can be given orally as well as limited in length. Teachers continually explore modification methods to meet individual learning styles. Students or parents may refer students to the counselor at each campus. Students in the 504 program are still required to meet all state performance criteria for testing and graduation coursework.

Summer School: The Elementary Summer School program provided opportunities for students who are at risk by not reading on grade level or who have not mastered the TAKS objectives to remain on grade level. The secondary program provides students the opportunity to take courses for credit that they have failed or for credit advancement. The secondary summer school program addresses the needs of students who want to take courses for credit recovery or advancement along with the needs of students who need to master the TAKS objectives.

STAAR Preparation: This is a remedial course for high school students who have failed any portion of the TAKS test in Math, English Language Arts, Science or Social Studies. Course credit for graduation is not awarded to students who enroll in this class.

Tutoring: In grades K-12, each classroom teacher is responsible for tutoring their students. The needs of the student help determine when tutoring will occur. Some students are tutored before or after the regular school day as well as during class time. After assessing student progress, deficient curriculum areas are stressed with academic and achievement level appropriate materials. Progress reports are sent out during the middle of each six-week grading period to alert students and parents when the student is in need of assistance.

LIBRARY: Students are encouraged to check out library books throughout the school year. Students are responsible for all library books issued to them during the year. All lost or damaged books must be paid for at the end of the year so that they can be replaced. Please encourage your child to become

an avid reader, and to care for, and return library books on time.

TEXTBOOKS: State adopted textbooks are selected by a district textbook committee and are approved by the School Board of Trustees. Students are issued textbooks each year and are responsible for the care and return of all textbooks. Permanently assigned textbooks must be covered. All lost or damaged books must be paid for at the end of the year so that they can be repaired or replaced. When classroom sets of textbooks are used, copies are available for students to check out through the library.

DELIVERIES

Orders for delivery must be cleared and delivered through the school office. The office will make deliveries to students and school personnel when the delivery is both convenient for the office personnel and when the delivery will not present a distraction to the class. Personal, non-school related items, such as balloons and flowers will not be delivered to students in the classrooms.

DONATIONS

Donations are generally very helpful throughout the school. Classroom teachers may request voluntary contributions from each family to purchase materials or may ask parents to donate specific items. There are many areas and programs in the district in constant need of donations, both of items and funding. However generous, some donated articles can't be used with students as the materials do not meet state or local school standards. Please check with teachers, librarians, the school office, principals, counselors, the technology coordinator, Central Administration or the PTO when planning for donations.

DRESS CODE

Each campus will provide a dress code for students. Dress codes are developed for student safety and to promote the educational process. Age appropriateness is evaluated when developing dress codes for each campus. Students will be expected to follow the dress code at each campus.

ENROLLMENT REQUIREMENTS

Kindergarten students must be five years old on or before September 1 of the current school year. First graders must be six years old by September 1 of the current year unless the child has completed public kindergarten in another state or has been receiving public first grade instruction in another state.

Kindergarten through High School students must provide the school with this documentation:

1. Birth certificate
2. Social Security Card
3. Proof of immunization (see requirements under HEALTH)
4. Report card from prior school.
5. Parent's/ Guardian's Drivers License or Texas Department of Transportation ID card or Guardian

All transfer students new to the district must provide the above information plus:

6. Withdrawal form from the child's former school (If transferring during the year.)
7. Previous year's report card (If transferring from another school district in August.)

FIELD TRIPS

Most students are involved in one or more field trips during the year. These trips provide valuable experiences for our students. Parent permission is required for student participation on field trips. A student must have a signed permission slip on file before any trip. Teachers will inform parents of upcoming trip dates and specific information concerning lunch, admission fees, appropriate clothing, etc. Please check with the teacher to see if parents are needed to accompany the class on trip dates.

FUND-RAISING EVENTS

PTO, CLASSES, and CLUBS: Members work to support and improve the educational programs and facilities of the school, to promote good relations among the school and our community, and to provide resources for parent education. These events generate funds which enrich our school community throughout the year. All fund raising events must have prior approval of the campus principal. No non- school sponsored entity is allowed to conduct fund raising at the school.

HEALTH

The campus nurses coordinate health related issues throughout the district by providing health care and educational learning throughout district curricula and program planning. They are a liaison between school, home and community for referrals and resources. Please call the school nurses whenever you have health or medical information, or questions concerning your student.

Each student must have received all immunizations required by the State of Texas at the time of school registration to qualify for school enrollment. The district is responsible for maintaining records to ensure that all students have met these requirements. In cooperation with parents, physicians and/or the Health Department, the district will communicate any immunization needs to students and parents. Failing to comply with the immunization requirements may result in your child being sent home and not permitted to return until the immunization requirements have been met.

CONTAGIOUS ILLNESSES: Whenever there is good reason to believe that a pupil is suffering from a recognized contagious or infectious disease, the pupil shall be sent home and shall not be permitted to return until the school authorities are satisfied that the condition no longer exists. If your student has a contagious illness, please notify the school office immediately so that the school can follow proper procedures for additional parent contacts. Students may not return to school unless they are no longer contagious. These students require a doctor's note to return to school.

EMERGENCY CARDS: It is extremely important that the school have current information that will enable parent contacts at all times. All parents/guardians must complete an emergency information card each year. Please carefully give all information requested. An "emergency medical plan" report should be on file for any student with an existing medical problem and/or allergy. Such problems as asthma, seizures and allergies to bug bites or bee stings should be reported to the school nurse. Please notify the school office of any changes to any of the emergency information.

HEALTH SCREENING: Systematically, the district screens students for scoliosis, acanthosis nigricans, vision and hearing. You may notify the principal of a school, in writing, if you do not wish to consent to screening examinations of your student for vision or hearing. State law requires the school to screen students for scoliosis and acanthosis nigricans. Parents wishing to exempt students from school screenings must provide documentation from a physician stating the student has been screened. The student would then be exempt from screening examinations unless there is a good reason to believe that the student is suffering from a contagious or infectious disease.

HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION: Serious illnesses and injuries requiring more than four weeks absence may qualify your child for home instruction. The student's ARD committee shall determine the amount of services to be provided to the student in this instructional arrangement/setting in accordance with federal and state laws, rules, and regulations.

ILLNESS:

During the day:

Minor maladies and injuries, which occur during the day, will be treated at school. If a child becomes ill or has a serious accident in school, the parent will be contacted and asked to take the child home. The school must have emergency information to reach the parent or contact-person immediately. In

the event of a serious injury and no parent can be contacted, the student will be accompanied to an emergency facility for treatment. Costs associated with medical treatment will be the responsibility of the parent.

Returning from an illness:

When a student returns to school after an illness absence, please give a note to the office stating the date/s of absence and nature of the illness.

IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS: The Texas Board of Health provides the Immunization Requirements for Children and Students in Texas Public Schools.

Diphtheria/Tetanus/Pertussis (DTP/DTaP/DT/Td): Every student under four years of age must enter school with a minimum of four doses. (An additional dose will be required after the fourth birthday.) Students four years through six years of age require a minimum of four doses with at least one dose after the fourth birthday. Students seven years of age or older require a minimum of three doses with at least one dose after the fourth birthday. A booster is required every 10 years.

Polio (OPV/IPV): Every student under four years of age must enter school with a minimum of three doses. (An additional dose will be required after the fourth birthday.) Students four years of age or older require a minimum of three doses with at least one dose after the fourth birthday. Polio vaccine is not required for persons 18 years or older.

Measles (Rubella): Effective 8/1/97, students who are five years of age or older and who were born on or after 9/2/91 must enter school with two doses of measles vaccine. Both doses must be after the first birthday. Students born prior to 9/2/91 are required to have two doses of measles vaccine with the first dose after the first birthday and second dose on or before the twelfth birthday. Only serologic confirmation is accepted in lieu of vaccination. (Lab tests confirming immunity.)

Mumps: One dose is required, on or after the first birthday. Only serologic confirmation is accepted in lieu of vaccination. (Lab tests confirming immunity.)

Rubella: One dose is required, on or after the first birthday. Only serologic confirmation is accepted in lieu of vaccination. (Lab tests confirming immunity.)

Hemophilus Influenza type b (Hib): Children fifteen months of age, but not yet five years of age, require one dose unless a schedule for a primary series (2 doses and a booster) was completed by fifteen months of age. Not required after five years of age.

Hepatitis B: Children born between September 2, 1988 and September 1, 1992 must show proof by 30 days after their 12th birthday of having received 3 doses of hepatitis B vaccine. Children born on or after September 2, 1992 are required to have 3 doses of hepatitis B vaccine by the time they turn 5 years old.

Varicella Vaccine (Chickenpox): Children born on or after September 2, 1994 who are 1 year old or older are required to receive 1 dose of varicella vaccine or to present documentation of previous varicella illness. Children born between September 2, 1988 and September 1, 1994 must show proof by 30 days after their 12th birthday or either having received 1 dose of varicella vaccine or of having previously had varicella illness.

STUDENTS TAKING MEDICATION ON AN ON-GOING BASIS: The parent or legal guardian of any student on continuing medication for a non-temporary condition shall inform the school nurse or other certified school employee of the medication being taken, the current dosage, and the name of the supervising physician. With the parent's or guardian's consent, the nurse may communicate with the physician and may counsel with school personnel regarding the possible effects of the drug on the child's physical, intellectual and social behavior, as well as possible signs and symptoms of adverse side effects, omission or overdose.

STUDENTS REQUIRING MEDICATION DURING THE SCHOOL DAY: Any pupil who is taking medication prescribed for him/her by a physician, may be assisted by the school nurse or other designated school personnel if the label on the original container includes: student's name, physician's name, name of drug, amount of frequency of dosage, and date prescription was filled.

All non-prescription drugs must include: Written request, student's name, drug name, amount of

frequency of dosage, reason for drug being given, date, and signature of parent or guardian.

All prescription or non-prescription drugs that need to be taken for more than 15 days must be accompanied by a written request signed and dated by the prescribing physician and the parent/guardian requesting the service.

HOMEWORK

Homework is-a valuable extension or elaboration of in-class work and is an integral part of a student's total learning experience. To derive the greatest benefit from school learning experiences, students must at times finish related study and follow-up work at home. Preparation homework helps to prepare students for an upcoming lesson or unit. Extension homework assignments require students to produce self-initiated projects, which allow students to apply and analyze information presented in class. Creative homework offers students the opportunity to think critically and engage in problem-solving activities. Homework develops planning and organization skills, responsibility, promotes student interaction with other students and family members, and provides the opportunity to apply concepts learned to real-life situations. Questions about homework assignments should first be addressed to the teacher.

INSURANCE

Students may be subject to injury when engaged in school activities. While the district does not provide medical or dental insurance and does not recommend any specific insurance plan, a Student Insurance Company brochure is available for your consideration. If a parent chooses to insure their student through this program, they need to complete the application and remit payment directly to the Student Insurance Company. In the event of a school injury or accident, a claim form is available in the school office. Please understand that parents will need to process any claims directly through the insurance company. The school district is not involved in claims processing.

LOST AND FOUND

If a student loses clothing or other property, please check with the teachers immediately, or in the general "lost and found" box maintained at each campus, or in the main office for smaller, more valuable items. Parents and students should label possessions, especially books, lunch boxes, coats, sweaters, and backpacks. Parents are encouraged to check the "lost and found" for clothing their student may have left at school.

PERSONAL PROPERTY: Students should not bring personal items to school, which may become lost or broken. The school is not responsible for lost, stolen or broken items.

OPERATIONS HOURS

CALENDAR: The District will publish a school calendar each year. Please keep the calendar for the duration of the year for information concerning school operational days, School Board of Trustees meetings, grading cycles, and student holidays. Please note the two snow days built into the calendar. When school has not necessitated closing for inclement weather, those days become holidays.

ARRIVAL: School hours are posted each year. Students are expected to arrive on time for school. As a safety precaution, parents should be aware that the school does not provide supervision before the official "intake" area is open in the morning. Please do not park in the drop-off area at any time and leave your car unattended. Students may chose to eat a school breakfast or remain quietly seated in the designated areas until released to go to classrooms. After the school day has begun, all students, parents or visitors coming to school must use the main school entrance and report to the school office.

DISMISSAL: Students who are not involved in a school related after school program are expected to leave the campus. As a safety precaution, parents should be aware that the school does not provide supervision after school except for students officially participating in an official school sponsored

function of which the student is a member.

Elementary School Campuses: Students will be monitored as they load after-school busses and in the pick-up area. Please do not park in the drop-off area at any time and leave your car unattended. Please be on time to pick up your child. Notify your child's teacher if anyone other than a parent or regular caregiver may be picking up your child. If an emergency situation occurs which causes a parent to be late to pick up a child, call the school office to advise school personnel of the situation.

Middle & High School Campus: Students who are not involved in an official school sponsored after-school activity are expected to leave the campus at the end of the school day. Students who remain on campus after school hours must be involved in official school business, under the supervision of an official school sponsor, or participating in an official school sponsored or approved activity.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Through the course of each school year, there are a number of ways in which parents can become active in your students education. Parent involvement should support a child's academic efforts at school and home, develop parenting skills, build consistent and effective home-school communications, and involve parents in the daily life of the school program. Parent and community participation is critical to the success of the programs in VISD. Some of the areas where parents can be involved and share their talents include:

ACADEMIC SPONSORS: Some of the academic teams such as UIL maybe sponsored by parent volunteers under the direction of a school sponsor.

BOOSTER CLUBS:

Athletic Booster Club:

This group of parents provides support and services to the athletic program in accordance with State Interscholastic League rules.

Band Booster Club:

This group of parents provides support and services to the band program under UIL guidelines.

CLASSROOM VOLUNTEERS: The PTO/PTSO Volunteer Coordinators train people to work in the schools in a variety of placements such as the office, the workroom, the library, and the classrooms.

CAMPUS LEADERSHIP TEAM, CLT: An advisory group of school personnel, parents, community members and business representatives who work with the Principals regarding areas related to campus operations.

DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TEAM, DLT: An advisory group of school personnel, parents, community members and business representatives who work with the Superintendent regarding areas related to district operations.

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES: Teachers have a daily scheduled conference period during which they are available to meet with parents. Parents should call the school office to schedule an appointment to meet with the teacher. In addition, a district-wide Parent-Teacher Conference Day will be held during the first semester.

PARENT, TEACHER ORGANIZATIONS, PTO: The campuses have active PTO groups. Financial support for special programs in and out of the school day is provided through membership dues and fund-raising events. These organizations sponsor monthly meetings and programs for parents to become better acquainted, meet school personnel, witness school programs and gain

parenting technique advice.

SCHOOL BOARD: The School Board of Trustees is a group of elected community members who are charged by law to govern the district through the adoption of school policies.

SUBSTITUTE TEACHING: Substituting at school can be a rewarding and learning experience. Please contact the campus principal or central office if you are interested. A Substitute teacher handbook is available for viewing at each campus and is available on the District web page. Parents are encouraged to support all substitute teachers' efforts to provide a safe and meaningful school day.

RIGHTS INFORMATION

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS: A parent is entitled to petition the board of trustees designating the school in the district that the parent's child attends; reasonable access to the school principal, or to a designated administrator with the authority to reassign a student, to request a change in the class or teacher to which the parent's child has been assigned, with the expectation that the request will not be unreasonably denied:

(A) the addition of a specific academic class in the course of study of the parent's child in keeping with the required curriculum if sufficient interest is shown in the addition of the class to make it economically practical to offer the class;

(B) that the parent's child be permitted to attend a class for credit above the child's grade level, whether, in the child's school or another school, unless the board or its designated representative expects that the child cannot perform satisfactorily in the class; or

(C) that the parent's child be permitted to graduate from high school earlier than the child would normally graduate, if the child completes each course required for graduation; and

(D) the decision of the board of trustees concerning these requests is final and may not be appealed. A parent is also entitled to have a child who graduates early participate in graduation ceremonies at the time the child graduates.

ACCESS TO TEACHING MATERIALS: A parent is entitled to review all teaching materials, textbooks, and other teaching aids used in the classroom of the parent's child; and review each test administered to the parent's child after the test is administered. The school district shall make teaching materials and tests readily available for review by parents. The district may specify reasonable hours for review.

ACCESS TO BOARD MEETINGS: A parent is entitled to complete access to any meeting of the board of trustees of the school district, other than a closed meeting held in compliance with Subchapters D and E, Chapter 551, Government Code. The board of trustees will hold each public meeting of the board within the boundaries of the district except as required by law or except to hold a joint meeting with another district.

CONSENT REQUIRED FOR CERTAIN ACTIVITIES: Employees will obtain the written consent of a child's parent before the employee may conduct a psychological examination, test, or treatment, unless the examination, test, or treatment is required under Section 38.004 or state or federal law regarding requirements for special education; or make or authorize the making of a videotape of a child or record or authorize the recording of a child's voice.

An employee of the school district is not required to obtain the consent of a child's parent before the employee may make a videotape of a child or authorize the recording of a child's voice if the videotape or voice recording is to be used only for purposes of safety, including the maintenance of order and discipline in common areas of the school or on school buses; a purpose related to a co-curricular or extra-curricular activity; a purpose related to regular classroom instruction; or media

coverage of the school.

COMPLAINTS / GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE: The Vernon School District Board of Education recognizes that the District has primary responsibility for ensuring compliance with state and federal laws and regulations governing complaints about specified district educational programs. The Vernon School District will receive and investigate complaints which allege unlawful discrimination on the basis of ethnic group identification, religion, age, sex, color, or physical or mental disability in any program or activity conducted by the district. Vernon ISD realizes that complaints and/or misunderstandings can occur. Resolving these complaints at the lowest possible level is the most effective manner in terms of both time and issues. The District shall investigate and seek to resolve complaints at the local level and shall follow uniform complaint procedures when addressing such complaints.

Staff, students, or parents on a student's behalf, may file a complaint dealing with alleged violation misinterpretation on inequitable application of the policies and practices of the school district relative to the provisions of Federal and State anti-discrimination legislation. The campus Principal or designee serves as the first step of the grievance procedure.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY: Students in the Vernon ISD will be afforded equal educational opportunity regardless of race, color, creed, religion, sex, ancestry, national origin or social or economic status. Lack of English language skills will not be a deterrent to admission to any program. No otherwise qualified handicapped individual shall solely by reason of their handicap, be denied the benefits of or subjected to discrimination in any activity.

EXEMPTION FROM INSTRUCTION: A parent is entitled to remove the parent's child temporarily from a class or other school activity that conflicts with the parent's religious or moral beliefs if the parent presents or delivers to the teacher of the parent's child a written statement authorizing the removal of the child from the class or other school activity. A parent is not entitled to remove the parent's child from a class or other school activity to avoid a test or to prevent the child from taking a subject for an entire semester. This section does not exempt a child from satisfying grade level or graduation requirements in a manner acceptable to the school district and the agency.

NON-DISCRIMINATION: Vernon ISD does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, or disability in providing education or providing access to benefits of education services, activities, and programs, including vocational programs, in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Vernon ISD will take steps to assure that lack of English language skills will not be a barrier to admission and participation in all educational and vocational programs. The following District staff member has been designated to coordinate compliance with these requirements. Max Tatum

NOTICE OF TEACHER CERTIFICATION: The District will provide a notice to parents of all students in a classroom taught by an uncertified or inappropriately certified teacher. This notice is required for teachers who are serving on an emergency certificate, or who do not hold a Texas certificate or permit or a school district teaching permit. The notice is required for assignments of more than 30 consecutive instructional days.

RACIAL/SEX DISCRIMINATION: The Vernon School District is opposed to racial/gender discrimination. If you or your student feels that a student is being discriminated against, a district procedure is available to review the alleged discrimination. Complaints should be filed with the teacher or Campus Principal.

RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES: A student will be released from school to observe a holiday or

ceremony of the student's religion. Parents/guardians are requested to provide written consent prior to the event. Parents are encouraged to schedule any religious instruction for their students during non-school hours since students will not be excused from school to receive religious instruction.

RIGHT TO EDUCATION: NON DISCRIMINATION: The Vernon School District Board of Education is committed to equal opportunity for all individuals in education and in employment and does not discriminate on the basis of sex, ethnic group classification, ancestry, religion, age, handicap or physical or mental disability, or any other unlawful consideration. The Nondiscrimination Policy Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 prohibits discrimination against persons with a disability in any program.

In order to fulfill its obligation under Section 504, VISD recognizes a responsibility to avoid discrimination in policies and practices regarding its personnel and students. No discrimination against any person with a disability will knowingly be permitted in any of the programs or practices in the school system.

VISD has specific responsibilities under the Act, which include the responsibility to identify, evaluate, and if the child is determined to be eligible under Section 504, to afford access to appropriate educational services. If the parent or guardian disagrees with the determination made by the professional staff of the school district, he/she has a right to informal mediation and/or a hearing with an impartial hearing officer. If there are questions, please contact the school principal.

RIGHT TO FULL INFORMATION CONCERNING STUDENT: A parent is entitled to full information regarding the school activities of a parent's child except as provided by Section 38.004. An attempt by any school district employee to encourage or coerce a child to withhold information from the child's parent is grounds for discipline.

STUDENT PROGRESS: The District will notify parents/guardians, at least once every three weeks, in writing, if a student's progress in any one of the foundation areas is "consistently unsatisfactory". The District will determine what constitutes "consistently unsatisfactory" performance.

STUDENT RECORDS: Each school maintains student records. Most records are under the supervision of the school principal and are located at the school; however, some psychological records are under the supervision of the Director of Special Education and are located at the Wilbarger County Special Education Co-op.

If you (the legal custodial parent or legal guardian) disagree with the content of your student's records, you may question the content of those records and request that the school principal authorize requested modifications. Information concerning district policy is outlined in the Board Policy Manual available in the district office and on the District web page.

The classification of the offense of tampering with a governmental record is a third degree felony if the record is a public school record or report or an assessment instrument.

Access to student records is supervised by the school principal. Individuals having access to student records are natural parents, adoptive parents or legal guardians, VISD employees as directed by school officials, officials of other public schools or school systems, authorized representatives of selected government offices where such information is necessary pursuant to federal or state law, parents of a student 18 years of age or older who is a dependent, or a student 16 years of age or older who has completed the tenth grade. Upon request, copies of student records will be made available to persons having access to those records.

The district must release pupil records via subpoena to the local police department, Texas Highway Patrol, the Wilbarger County District Attorney, Wilbarger County welfare fraud investigators or any prosecuting agency, Wilbarger County Probation Department, Wilbarger County Child Protective

Services, State or Federal Court of Jurisdiction.

The agency or a school district may charge a reasonable fee for copies of materials provided to a parent.

SAFETY AND SECURITY INFORMATION

EMERGENCY DRILLS: A crisis management handbook is available in each of the VISD schools.

BUS EVACUATION: Bus evacuation drills are coordinated through the transportation department to practice safety techniques each year.

EVACUATION DRILLS: The District and the local police have coordinated evacuation plans and procedures. In the event an evacuation is necessary for the safety of the students, with the school's assistance, the local police will direct the evacuation.

FIRE DRILLS: Fire drills in school are conducted to provide safety and protection for children and staff. The drills enable students to practice how to recognize and respond to signals, listen to and follow specific directions, and walk quickly and silently away from the school building.

LOCK DOWN: In the event of a crisis, each campus is prepared for a total lockdown. In the event of a lockdown, the doors to the school will be secured pending an appropriate official security release.

TORNADO DRILLS: Tornado drills are practiced each year. During tornado season, the school District uses a weather radio alert system and is in contact with the local police for emergency status updates. School will not be released when tornadoes present a current danger, however parents may come to the office to pick up their own student.

EMERGENCY CARDS: It is important that the school have information that will enable the staff to contact parents at all times. Please contact the school when any changes need to be made to the emergency card in the main office and in the nurse's office. Please make emergency home arrangements for your child in the event of an emergency situation.

INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT: Structural and landscape pests can pose significant problems to people, property, and the environment. Pesticides can also pose risks to people, property, and the environment. It is therefore the policy of this School District to incorporate Integrated Pest Management (IPM) procedures for control of structural and landscape pests. Please contact the District Maintenance Department for information concerning pest control.

LEGAL GUARDIAN: If a legal caregiver has sole custody of a child, legal paperwork must be on file in the main office. Teachers will follow all court-mandated orders to the best of their ability. Parents must also be aware that substitutes are often in the building and they do not have access to student's permanent records. Please alert the Principal and the teacher if there are any security issues with a student. A student should become their own first safety advocate by alerting teachers or other school personnel when they have safety concerns. Students should know with whom they can, and cannot leave school.

STUDENT DIRECTORY INFORMATION: The District may release directory information, including name, address, phone number, grade level, etc., unless the parent has notified the district in writing that such information not be released.

TRANSPORTATION: Parents of all elementary students should provide each child's teacher with a designated "going home plan." Teachers will maintain and follow this plan unless the parent notifies

them otherwise. In making any changes to the normal "going home plan", please send a note or call the school office in ample time for the office to inform the classroom teacher.

Rules and regulations for scheduling, student security, and behavior are provided by the transportation department. Riding the bus is a privilege and the driver is the authority on the bus. Conduct abuse will result in the student and parent assuming the entire responsibility for transportation to and from school.

VISITORS: Parents are welcome to visit the school. Anyone wishing to visit a class or schedule a conference should make an appointment with the teacher. This should be done through the main office

before the appointment or visit. All parents and visitors who enter the school during the day must use the main entrance, sign in at the front office, and obtain a visitor's badge. Students are not permitted to bring a friend, guest or relative to school.

SCHOOL – PARENT – STUDENT COMPACT

The Vernon Independent School District is committed to providing the best education possible for each of our students. It is our goal to give every child the opportunity to reach his/her full potential in intellectual, emotional and physical growth. We know that learning can take place if there is a combination of effort, interest, and motivation on the part of the school, the home, and the community working together.

Expectations of District Staff:

Provide a suitable learning environment

Use methods and techniques that work best for all students in the classroom

Communicate effectively with students and parents

Provide information to students and parents on the student's progress

Help each student to grow to his/her fullest potential by providing a high quality curriculum

Expectations of Students:

Attend school regularly

Do your best in your work and behavior

Respect yourself fellow students and adults

Request assistance when needed

Complete all assignments (classroom and homework) on time

Expectations of Parents:

Encourage good study habits

Communicate with teachers and district staff

Encourage your child to resolve conflicts in a positive manner

Support your child and district staff and respect individual differences

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

The Student Code of Conduct describes the discipline procedures of the district. It is distributed to all students and/or parents, teachers, and administrators at the beginning of each school year. It is also provided to new professional employees, newly enrolled students, any parent, and any other person on request. Any changes made during the year shall be published and distributed to all students.

Throughout the Student Code of Conduct, Federal and State statutes and codes are cited. Copies of these statutes and codes are available for your examination in the Superintendent's Office and on the District web page. Parents are asked to sign a statement that they have received a copy of the Student

Code of Conduct. Questions, comments, and/or suggestions concerning the content of this document should be addressed to your building principal.

STUDENT SUCCESS INITIATIVE

The Texas student success Initiative (SSI) was passed by the 76th Texas legislature in 1999. The purpose of this initiative is to ensure that every student makes the academic progress necessary to show sufficient understanding of the knowledge and skills taught and tested at each grade level.

The Student Success Initiative (SSI) grade advancement requirements apply to the Grade 3 reading test and the Grade 5 reading and mathematics tests. The SSI requirements will be phased in for the Grade 8 reading and mathematics tests beginning in the 2007-2008 school year. As specified by these requirements, a student may advance to the next grade level only by passing these tests or by unanimous decision of his or her grade placement committee that the student is likely to perform at grade level after additional instruction. A number of materials have been developed to help schools implement the SSI grade advancement requirements and to help parents understand this initiative. These materials are available in both English and Spanish at <http://www.tea.state.tx.us/student.assessment/resources/ssi/index.html>.

Please note that these testing requirements are part of an overall system of support for student academic achievement.

This system includes

- . evaluation of student needs at grades that precede SSI grades and academic support for students who need additional instruction;
- . ongoing evaluation of student progress during the school year for SSI grades (currently Grades 3 and 5) with assistance provided to all students with identified academic weaknesses;
- . three testing opportunities;
- . additional instruction after each test administration for students who do not meet the passing standard;
- . a grade placement committee, consisting of the principal, teacher, and parent or guardian, which meets when a student has not met the passing standard after two testing opportunities and decides the most effective way to support the child's academic success; and
- . an instructional plan for every student who has not met the passing standard after three opportunities, regardless of whether the student is retained or, upon parent appeal, is promoted by the grade placement committee.